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lightning
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Time for a new Space force?

The sooner the better

By Charlotte K. Scharer

EDITOR'S NOTE: The intent of the Pro and Con section of the Army Space Journal is to encourage conversation on lightning rod Space issues. It provides a free flowing discussion by people involved with the issues. We want to stimulate ongoing dialog among Space professionals. The opinions expressed in these articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Army Space Journal, U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command or the Department of the Army.

Much has been written in favor of organizing and managing "Space" for future warfighting. The concept of a separate Space force is not a new idea. Many have recommended this concept. Revising the organization, training, and equipping of Space assets and forces have been subjects of debate for many years and many meetings. But has the Army lost the ability to adequately plan for the future? Have we gotten so caught up in the problems of today that we have lost the ability to formulate a realistic vision and path toward making a separate Space force a serious consideration or course of action? How do we balance the investment required against today's pressing warfighter needs? How do we tell when the new organization has matured sufficiently before it is required to perform on the battlefield? Where does a separate Space force fit in the transformed future force and when will it be ready for the change? While the Army has made great strides to integrate Space and make it useful to Soldiers on the battlefield, I argue that the right time is sooner than most would think.

A separate Space force will require commitment and significant resources. Congress directed the Space Commission to consider four organizational approaches: (1) A new military department for Space; (2) Space corps within the Department

of the Air Force; (3) creation of a new Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space; and (4) identification of a major force program for Space. It bears repeating that the Space Commission's recommendation left the possibility for a separate Space force open and recommended creation of an Under Secretary of Defense for Space. Though the Bush administration has raised the profile of Space and somewhat contained the routine budget raids to fund other programs that were a standard operating procedure under past administrations, more commitment from the commander in chief is needed. From many perspectives, the current administration has not yet gone far enough to lead the charge to break technology barriers or form the needed foundational relationships with industry. These actions would require additional resources and sustained tenacious commitment. If it is going to happen, it needs to be done during this administration's second term. Change and commitment are expensive as evidenced recently in the national Space community. The merger of U.S. Space Command and U.S. Strategic Command is just one example of a sweeping change that has continued to demand resources, time and attention within a "zero sum" gain. New legislation that allows for the possibility of far-reaching changes in the intelligence community is another example. Advantages to additional change, including a separate Space force, could and should be seriously considered.

In early 2001, the Space Commission reported that there was not yet a critical mass of qualified personnel, budget, requirements and missions sufficient to establish a new department. The Space Commission further directed near- and mid-term organizational adjustments should be

fashioned so as not to “preclude” eventual evolutions toward a Space department if that proved desirable. It is 2005 already. While many of the best-formed visions and plans have gone the way of the dodo bird, the operational need for effective Space assets and a potential Space force to manage them has not.

The Space Commission discussed policy, procedural and leadership changes at length. I will not attempt to comment on every one. I would assert, however, that we have made little progress since the commission did its work. We are not where we need to be. A separate Space force could act with greater force in resolving many issues. Forces should be separate when the doctrine, lexicon and operations are significantly different from those of the original organization and the reorganization creates the potential to better achieve strategic objectives in assigned mission areas. Specialized pockets of knowledge about Space systems and their operations have long existed within all the services and several national agencies.

I do not buy into the notion that Space is merely a transit point for information. Space and Space assets have inherent technical advantages. An effective Space system not only makes information available, but also ensures the necessary analysis by Space forces to make the information useful to the troops. Information distribution is, in my mind, a problem for the Global Information Grid. We are essentially funding and maintaining multiple Space forces. Combining these service and agency assets could have many inherent advantages.

The broad mission areas of intelligence, information operations, Space situational awareness, Space control, electronic warfare and force application have been recognized as overlapping. In June 2003, Department of Defense Directive 5101.2 assigned responsibility to the Secretary of the Air Force for planning, programming and acquisition of Space systems within the Department of Defense (DoD). A large step toward integrating Space and intelligence was taken in designating the Under Secretary of the Air Force to also serve as the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO). The Air Force assumed new responsibilities for providing Space assets to the warfighter. But is this management structure effective enough? The emerging “joint interdependent” construct could and should be used for Space. When pitted in heated budget battles, general officers would have to rob a separate agency instead of their own coffers for reallocating resources. Imagine if the Navy and the Army recognized and acknowledged that an interdependent relationship would provide the optimal benefits from Space to their success rather than engaging in a funding competition for another ship or armored vehicle. A separate Space force would have responsibilities to manage assets effectively for the benefit of all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen

and Marines.

The General Accounting Office reported in August 2004 that the services are at varying degrees of maturity in implementing and effectively managing human capital and Space personnel. This report cites that DoD has published a strategy with goals and objectives, but lacks specific timelines and evaluation measures to implement this strategy. Each service has taken a separate approach in performing force management analysis and proposing courses of action. Personnel development improvements are difficult particularly when the benefits are long term and not easily achieved or measured. Besides the unique missions and specific technologies and systems, there is a lot to know when aspiring to be a Space cadre member. The basic building blocks such as the principles of mathematics, physics and engineering are an integral part of a cadre member's required knowledge base and skills. This base readily transfers to other scientific and technical endeavors, lending credibility to the assertion that there is a critical retention problem with the current Space cadre.

The technical difficulties with assessing “effectiveness” are complicated by the government's general problems in assuring incentives and accountability measures are in place. Further, multiple service organizations (for the Army there are three: Army Space and Missile Defense Command, Army Human Resources Command, and Operations and Plans within Headquarters, Department of the Army) have responsibilities for management of parts of the service Space cadre. As an Army organization that continues to change, we forget the people whose careers and lives are affected by change. How is that measured and incorporated in the decisions that affect whole communities?

I would argue that, in fact, it is an often overlooked reality. It is assumed away based on the amazing ability of people to adapt. The quality of the people that make up the Space cadre will most likely make it work whether it is a service-based organization or a separate Space force.

The newly renamed Future Warfare Center, Directorate of Combat Development (formerly known as the Force Development and Integration Center) is responsible for conducting the Army Space Cadre Force Management Analysis (FORMAL) and is charged with acting as the single office managing and coordinating the ongoing Space cadre studies. The process is taking considerable resources to map out the needed analysis, actions and decisions. It will take multiple years and thousands of man-hours to complete.

As an early result, the Army has begun additional partnering efforts and is now providing high quality experienced Space officers as staff members to the Air Force's National Security Space Institute. A separate Space force could ease the organizational pain of these difficult service decisions by advocating from the highest levels that the benefits to the future force are

(See Positive View, page 50)

Positive View ... from page 21

worth resourcing. The education and advocacy burden could be streamlined with benefits for the organization and the personnel.

The longer-term goals cannot be achieved if we do not consider a separate Space force as a viable implementation option. Consolidating several competing organizational structures and providing additional resources that cannot be moved or reallocated to other efforts is needed. A near-term timeline that shows the need for Space forces to be in place today should be one of the compelling arguments to fielding this type of force structure sooner rather than later.

In conclusion, there continues to be a disturbing disconnect in organizational management of Space-smart personnel that a separate force could potentially remedy. High-level consolidation of separate, ongoing service analyses needs to be made before the DoD spends huge amounts of resources on the Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force Space cadre solutions. Better partnering is not enough. To overcome

the budgetary issues, collective resources should be combined and consolidated into one new organization. Research, experience and common sense all increasingly point to a direct relationship between an organization's success and its commitment to management practices that treat people as assets. However, current trends in military management practices that are particularly evident when it comes to the Space cadre are actually moving away from these principles. Drawing on extensive empirical research, an irrefutable business case can be made that the culture and capabilities of an organization — derived from the way it manages its people — are the real and enduring sources of competitive advantages. And competitive advantages when coupled with common sense rather than pure technology can save lives, win battles and even turn the tide in wartime. Commanders today must begin to take seriously the often heard, yet frequently ignored, adage that people are the most important asset in any organization. Further, leadership should

keep as a goal providing incentives to the people with Space experience and expertise when contemplating future Space and Space cadre reorganization. The foundation for a potential separate Space cadre has been emerging for several years. The compelling argument that requires organizational change sooner rather than later can be made today. The claimed desire for an organization that values people and their skills and experience could make a significant difference in the formulation of a separate Space force. This new organization could be the solution for overall improvement in resource management that could be implemented on a timeline that capitalizes on this administration's support.

Charlotte Scharer serves as the Space branch general engineer for the Future Warfare Center. She has had the opportunity to participate in many Space and Space control efforts and has successfully performed as a key government technical contributor on a broad spectrum of force development and integration topics. She is responsible for developing Army Space requirements for the capabilities development division.